Numb. XXVI.

The LOVER.

By MARMADUKE MYRTLE, *Gent.*

Durum, ſed levius fit patientiâ
Quicquid corrigere eſt nefas. Hor.

Saturday, April 24. 1714.

SIR,

'I Find you are an Author who are more inclined to give your Advice in Caſes which 'raiſe Mirth in your Readers, than in thoſe 'which are of a more ſerious and melancholy Nature. But you know very well, that in virtuous Love there are many unhappy Accidents 'which may lay a claim to your Compaſſion, and 'conſequently to your Aſſiſtance. I my ſelf am 'one of thoſe diſtreſſed Perſons, who may come in 'for my Share of your Concern. About eight 'Years ago I married a young Woman of great 'Merit, who was every way qualified for a Boſom 'Friend, that is, for advancing the innocent Pleaſures of Life and alleviating its Misfortunes. She 'had all the good Senſe I ever met with in any 'Male Acquaintance, with all that Sweetneſs of 'Temper which is peculiar to the moſt engaging 'of her Sex. Life was too happy with ſuch a Companion in it; for I muſt tell you, with Tears, 'that ſhe was ſnatched away from me by a Feaver 'about twelve Months ſince. I was the more unable to bear this unſpeakable Loſs, as having converſed with very few beſides her ſelf during the 'whole Time of our Marriage. We were the 'whole World to one another, and whilſt we lived 'together, tho' ſcarce either of us were ever in 'Company, we were never alone. Being thus cut 'off from the Society of others, and from the Perſon who was moſt dear to me, I naturally betook 'my ſelf to the reading of ſuch Books as might 'tend to my Relief under this my great Calamity; 'after many others which I have peruſed upon 'this Occaſion, I lately had the good Fortune to 'meet with a little Volume of Sermons, juſt Publiſhed, entitled, *Of Contentment, Patience, and Reſignation to the Will of God, in ſeveral Sermons, by* Iſaac Barrow, *D. D.*

'The Duty of Contentment is ſo admirably explained, recommended, and enforced by Arguments drawn from Reaſon and Religion, that it 'is impoſſible to read what he has ſaid on this Subject without being the better for it. I ſhall beg 'leave to tranſcribe two or three Paſſages, which 'more immediately affected me, as they came home 'to my own Condition.

'*The Death of Friends doth, it may be, oppreſs thee 'with Sorrow. But canſt thou loſe thy beſt Friend? 'canſt thou loſe the Preſence, the Converſation, the 'Protection, the Advice, the Succour of God? Is he 'not immortal, is he not immutable, is he not inſeparable from thee? Canſt thou be deſtitute of Friends, 'whilſt he ſtands by thee? Is it not an Affront, an 'heinous Indignity to him, to behave thy ſelf as if 'thy Happineſs, thy Welfare, thy Comfort, had Dependance on any other but him? Is it not a great 'Fault to be unwilling to part with any thing, when 'he calleth for it? Neither is it a loſs of thy Friend, 'but a ſeparation for a ſmall time; he is only parted 'from thee, as taking a little Journey, or going for a 'ſmall time to Repoſe, within a while we ſhall be ſure 'to meet again, and joyfully to congratulate, if we are 'fit, in a better Place, and more happy State*; Præmiſimus, non amiſimus; *we have ſent him thither 'before, not quite loſt him from us.*

'*Thy Friend, if he be a good Man (and in ſuch 'Friendſhips only, we can have a true Satisfaction) 'is himſelf in no bad Condition, and doth not want 'thee; thou canſt not therefore reaſonably grieve for 'him; and to grieve only for thy ſelf, is perverſe Selfiſhneſs and Fondneſs.*

'What follows runs on in the ſame Vein of 'good Senſe, tho' it is a Conſolation which I my 'ſelf cannot make uſe of.

'*But thou haſt loſt a great Comfort of thy Life, and 'Advantage to thy Affairs here? Is it truly ſo? Is it 'indeed an irreparable Loſs, even ſecluding the Conſideration of God, whoſe Friendſhip repaireth all poſſible Loſs? What is it, I pray, that was pleaſant, 'convenient, or uſeful to thee in thy Friend, which 'may not in good meaſure be ſupplied here? Was it 'a Senſe of hearty good Will, was it a ſweet freedom 'of Converſation, was it ſound Advice, or kind Aſſiſtance in thy Affairs? And mayſt thou not find 'thoſe which are alike able, and willing to miniſter 'thoſe Benefits? May not the ſame means, which knit 'him to thee, conciliate others alſo to be thy Friends? 'He did not alone ſurely poſſeſs all the Good-nature, 'all the Fidelity, all the Wiſdom in the World, nor 'hath carried them all away with him? Other Friends 'therefore thou mayſt find to ſupply his room; all 'good Men will be ready, if thou art good, to be thy 'Friends: They will heartily love thee, they will be 'ready to chear thee with their ſweet and wholſome 'Society, to yield thee their beſt Counſel and Help 'upon any Occaſion. Is it not therefore a fond and unaccountable Affection to a kind of Perſonality, 'rather than want of a real Convenience, that diſturbeth thee?*

'*In*

'*In fine, the ſame Reaſons which in any other Loſs may comfort us, ſhould do it alſo in this; neither a Friend, nor any other good thing we can enjoy under any Security of not ſoon loſing it: Our Welfare is not annexed to one Man, no more than to any other inferior thing; this is the Condition of all good things here, to be tranſient and ſeparable from us, and accordingly we ſhould be affected towards them.*

Fragile fractum eſt, mortale mortuum eſt.

'Give me leave to cite alſo out of this great Author a very agreeable Story which is taken from '*Julian's* Epiſtles, and which perhaps pleaſes me the more, as it is applicable to my own caſe.

'*When once a great King did exceſſively and obſtinately grieve for the Death of his Wife, whom he tenderly loved, a Philoſopher obſerving it, told him, that he was ready to comfort him, by reſtoring her to Life, ſuppoſing only that he would ſupply what was needful towards the performing it; the King ſaid he was ready to furniſh him with any thing; the Philoſopher anſwered, that he was provided with all things neceſſary except one thing: What that was the King demanded; he replied, That if he would upon his Wife's Tomb inſcribe the Names of three Perſons who never mourned, ſhe preſently would revive. The King, after Enquiry, told the Philoſopher that he could not find one ſuch Man: Why then, O abſurdeſt of all Men (ſaid the Philoſopher ſmiling) art thou not aſhamed to moan as if thou hadſt alone fallen into ſo grievous a Caſe; when as thou canſt not find one Perſon that ever was free from ſuch Domeſtick Affliction. So might the naming one Perſon, exempted from Inconveniences like to thoſe we undergo, be ſafely propoſed to us as a certain Cure of ours; but if we find the Condition impoſſible, then is the generality of the Caſe a ſufficient ground of Content to us, then may we, as the wiſe Poet adviſeth, Solace our own Evils by the Evils of others.*

'I have obſerved, Sir, in your Writings many Hints and Obſervations upon the moſt common Subjects which appeared new to me, I ſhould therefore beg of you to turn your Thoughts upon that melancholy Accident which is the Occaſion of this Letter. If you can give me any additional Motives of Comfort, I ſhall receive it as a very great Piece of Charity, and I believe you may oblige many others who are under the ſame kind of Affliction, as well as,

SIR,

Your moſt humble Servant,

R. B.

This Gentleman has too favourable an Opinion of me, if he thinks me capable of adding any thing material to what has been handled by the excellent Author whom he has mentioned in his Letter. That learned Man always exhauſts his Subjects, and leaves nothing for thoſe who come after him. He was not only a great Divine, but was perfectly well acquainted with all the ancient Writers of Morality, whoſe Thoughts he has every where digeſted into his Writings, and, at the ſame time, had a moſt inexhauſtible Fund of Obſervation and good Senſe in himſelf. He has ſcarce a Sermon that might not be ſpun out into a hundred modiſh Diſcourſes from the Pulpit: For which Reaſon I am very glad to find, that we are likely to have a new Edition of his Works.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Juſt Publiſhed, a neat Pocket Edition of Dr. Iſaac Barrow's Diſcourſes of Contentment, Patience and Reſignation to the Divine Will. Printed for J. Round in Exchange-Alley, J. Tonſon in the Strand, and W. Taylor at the Ship in Pater-noſter-row. Where may be had Boetius of the Conſolation of Philoſophy, made Engliſh and illuſtrated with Notes by the Lord Viſcount Preſton.

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